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CHURCHILL DOWNS TO INSTALL NEW TURF COURSE

*\$10 Million Project to Provide Additional Racing Lanes;
More Durable, Vigorous Surface to Allow More Turf Racing Annually*

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, Nov. 23, 2020) – Churchill Downs Racetrack will invest \$10 million to install a new turf course that will widen the running surface and increase the durability to allow increased turf racing throughout the year at the historic home of the Kentucky Derby.

The capital project will begin immediately after the completion of the 2021 Spring Meet and be ready for turf racing to resume at the start of the 2022 Spring Meet. If growing conditions are favorable enough, the new grass course could be ready for use by the November 2021 Fall Meet.

The current Matt Winn Turf Course, a 7/8-mile oval situated inside the one-mile dirt track, is the original surface when grass racing debuted 35 years ago at Churchill Downs in 1985. It is comprised of four-inch high Kentucky 31 Fescue (90%) and Bluegrass (10%) grown in a three-inch topsoil layer over a 13-inch course masonry sand base.

The new and more robust turf course will be a similar blend of fescue and bluegrass and will have a redesigned subsurface. The growing medium will contain a six-inch upper root zone layer created with a blended mix of topsoil and grit sand which will sit on a six-inch lower sand layer constructed with masonry sand. Churchill Downs planted several test plots in the spring of 2019 and selected the best for use in the new turf course.

The current track, which is 80 feet wide, was designed with a crown that runs down the center of the track to facilitate drainage, limiting the number of running lanes.

The new turf course includes a new state-of-the-art irrigation and drainage system, will be widened to 85 feet and be designed to use the full width and banking in the turns. The new course will provide multiple rail movement options with the capacity to accommodate four racing lanes that range from 0 to 36 feet out and as many as 14 participants per race.

Churchill Downs retained the United Kingdom-based STRI Group to design a new racing surface for the historic track. STRI has designed, constructed, maintained and provided consulting and monitoring services for world-class turf surfaces supporting equine athletics at the highest level, including Ascot Racecourse and Riyadh Equestrian Club. Additionally, STRI has provided grass consulting to signature international sporting events, including soccer's FIFA World Cup, tennis' Wimbledon and golf's Open Championship.

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As a result of the turf project, there will be no stabling at Churchill Downs for eight weeks during the months of July and August. Also, there will be no turf racing during the 2021 September Meet to allow the roots to grow down and the turf to take hold.

Churchill Downs stages approximately 700 races each year during its three race meets with about 25% of those races scheduled for the turf. In 2019, there were 169 scheduled grass races but 43 of those events were transferred to the dirt because of inclement weather or suboptimal course conditions.

ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK

Churchill Downs Racetrack (“CDRT”), the world’s most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The saddling paddock and the stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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